THE MINISTER OF STATE OF OTE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI. P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir, Discussions were held with the United States Trade Represen tative, Ms. Carla Hills, in Washing ton on 24 September, 1991 on various issues before the Uruguay Round, including the Intellectual Property Rights, and the process of macro-economic reforms under way in India.

(to) No, Sir. There was no discus-sion pertaining to the so-called Pressor Amendment.

(,c) A , number of measures have been introduced to improve our ex port competitiveness on a global basis.

Modifications in Tehri Dam Project as a result of earthquake

74.. SHRI RAM NARESH YADAV
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether in the wake of the recent earthquake in the Himalayas, the Tehri Dam Project would be stopped and the same will be resumed only after some modification therein; and

(b) what are the details of Government's plans in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND JNON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI KALP NATH RAI): Ca) No, Sir. The recent earthquake in the Garhwal Hills measured 6.1 on the Richter Scale, while the proposed Tehri Dam is designed to withstand an earthquake of Magnitude 8 on the Richter Scale. The present earthquake has caused no damage to constructed structures of Tehri Dam i.e. head race tunnels, diversion tunnels and dam -foundation.

(b) Does not arise.

Excise duty on hand made match-sticks

*75. SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state whether Government propose to remove excise duty on hand made match sticks as this duty is a burden on the consumers who are from the lower middle classes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKJJR): There is no proposal at present to exempt hand made matches from excise duty.

Privatisation of Financial Institutions and Nationalised Banks

*76. KUMARI ALIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to
state-

(a) whether Government have a proposal for privatisation of financial institutions and denationalisation of some Banks; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MIINSTER ,OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) Government is not currently considering any proposal for the privatisation of financial institutions for the de-nati-onalisation of public .sector banks.

(b) Does not arise.